

That is absurd. We understand when it is absolutely essential, and it was essential in the case of Afghanistan.

I voted against the Iraq war because it appeared obvious to me that was not the wise next strategic move in the fight against al-Qaida, those who attacked us. It was pretty clear to me, but it was even clear apparently to this administration when, on their own State Department Web site, where President Bush had his name, they listed the 45 countries where they believed al-Qaida was operating. This came out in November of 2001. It included, obviously, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ireland, the United States. Guess what country wasn't even on their list. Iraq. And this has been confirmed publicly by the recognition now, despite the gross misrepresentations that al-Zarqawi was not even in the part of Iraq controlled by Saddam Hussein when we invaded Iraq.

It is pretty obvious on the face of this that this was not the place to go if we wanted to deal with al-Qaida. They were not there then, but because of the errors we have made, we created a beachhead for them to do far more in Iraq than they ever could in the past.

I understand former Secretary of State James Baker, Secretary of State under the first George Bush, said he used to go around the country and people would ask him every day: Why didn't you go on into Iraq at the time of the first gulf war? He says with a smile: I don't get asked that question anymore because it didn't make sense. It didn't make sense then, and it doesn't make sense now.

One of the theories we hear is that somehow staying in Iraq is necessary because what we are going to do is have all the terrorists come into Iraq, and we are going to get them all, and then they wouldn't be able to attack us anywhere else. Some call this the roach-motel theory, the idea that all these terrorists all over the world are simply focused on Iraq and by staying we are going to get them. This is what I would like to call an Iraq centrist policy, a policy that somehow believes Iraq is the be all and end all of our foreign policy when, of course, it is nothing of the kind.

The fact is, those against al-Qaida is a much broader fight. I have seen estimates of somewhere between 60 to 80 countries where al-Qaida is operating. Yet our focus, our troops, and our resources are only heavily focused on this Iraq situation. This is just plain tragic 5 years after 9/11.

One might say we are fighting the terrorists in other countries, too; we are doing whatever we can. But we are not. We have taken our eye off the ball. We are not dealing with the al-Qaida threat in other countries because we are so focused on Iraq.

One good example is Somalia. Remember Somalia? This is a place where we know there were al-Qaida operatives and affiliated groups. It is one of those failed states where it is al-

most an invitation to terrorist organizations to come in and organize and be away from any kind of control. Because we haven't been paying attention to Somalia, because we don't have a policy in Somalia, guess what just happened. A radical Islamist group has taken over Mogadishu and now threatens to take over the rest of the country.

I can't say for sure what they will do, but there are indications they may be very much like the type of Taliban government or organization that fostered al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

So we have taken our eye off the ball. In fact, I asked Ambassador Crumpton last week in a public hearing: How many people do we have in the Government devoted to Somalia full time? Mr. President, do you know what his answer was? One person. One person in a country that is clearly a threat in terms of al-Qaida.

It is not just there. What about Indonesia? Indonesia is the largest Islamic country in the entire world. It is the fourth largest country in the world. I heard Senators debating who had been to Iraq the most. One said he had been there 12 times. One said he had been there 11 times. Guess how many Senators have even been to Indonesia once in the last 2½ years. Just two of us, Senator BOND and myself, to a country that is being terrorized by a group called JI, Jemaah Islamiah, that is clearly affiliated with al-Qaida.

We are not paying attention to Indonesia. We are not putting our political and other resources there. We are only focused on Iraq where al-Qaida wasn't even operating as of the time of the invasion.

If that isn't enough, what about Afghanistan? I think we can all agree that Afghanistan is a place where we ought to win, where we shouldn't deplete our resources—well, we shouldn't, in the words of my colleagues on the other side, cut and run. But we are now feeling the consequences of what some have called the Iraq tax in Afghanistan, and that is the resurgence of Taliban fighters.

The recent death of more U.S. and Afghan soldiers there and the continued presence of terrorist networks in the region show how shortsighted this administration was by taking its eye off the ball.

We have not finished the job in Afghanistan, and we are now at risk of backsliding into instability. This is where the attack on the Twin Towers and the Pentagon was planned. This is where it was done. And because of this overemphasis and obsession with only staying in Iraq, we are allowing the Taliban and perhaps al-Qaida to get back in.

Let me give an example of what some said about this. A recent expert indicated with regard to the Afghanistan situation:

It is now 5 years since George W. Bush declared victory in Afghanistan and said that the terrorists were smashed.

Since the Bonn meeting in late 2001, a smorgasbord of international military and development forces has been increasing in size. How is it then that Afghanistan is near collapse once again? To put it briefly, what has gone wrong has been the invasion of Iraq. What has gone wrong is the invasion of Iraq. Washington's refusal to take State-building in Afghanistan seriously, and instead waging a fruitless war in Iraq. That view is shared by many others. I assure you I could give you many other examples.

But the point is, despite the fact that we all know who attacked us on 9/11, we are not focused on them. It is the most absurd situation I have ever seen in my 25 years as a legislator. Everybody knows we went into Iraq on a mistaken basis. Everybody knows that al-Qaida is the one who attacked us. Yet somehow our colleagues on the other side are trying to pretend they are one and the same thing, when everybody knows it is nothing of the kind.

So we have to change course. We have to refocus our energies on those who attacked us. I have heard a number of statements on the floor today, and I have been out here on and off since noon listening to the debate. I heard the Senator from Kentucky make the assertion that if we don't, they will soon be back here—meaning in the United States—if we don't stop them in Iraq. Well, the fact is, they are being effective in attacking us and our colleagues and our allies in many other places: In Indonesia, in London, in Madrid, in Turkey, in Morocco. It is not as if there haven't been any attacks. It is not as if this al-Qaida organization isn't functioning. I mean, under their argument, apparently we should invade all those other countries on false pretenses as a way to somehow root out the terrorists. But we know that approach doesn't work.

If we continue to be stuck in Iraq, we are facilitating al-Qaida's future. We are facilitating their recruitment. We are facilitating the growth of their operations in places such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. We are facilitating al-Qaida if we continue to make this mistake in Iraq over and over again. That is what I care the most about.

One of my colleagues, the Senator from Texas, Senator HUTCHISON said: If we were to withdraw the troops or redeploy the troops in the coming year, we would be giving the enemy the playbook. Well, my point is, we need a new playbook. The playbook has nothing to do with 9/11. The playbook has nothing to do with al-Qaida. We need a new playbook that has something to do with what really threatens the American people. That is what the Kerry-Feingold amendment is all about. It is not about just taking off. What it is about is refocusing.

Of course, we have been faced all day with all of the horrible things that might happen if we bring the troops